**Romans 3:21-26**

**“Faith Alone”**

**Five Flawless Testimonies to *Sola Fide –* Faith Alone**

**1. The Divine Provision of our Salvation**

**:21 But now**

**apart from the Law**

**the righteousness of God has been manifested,**

**being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,**

**:22 even the righteousness of God**

**2. The Straightforward** simple **Means of our Salvation**

even the righteousness of God

**through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe;**

**3. The Universal Need of our Salvation**

through faith in Jesus Christ for **all** those who believe

**for there is no distinction;**

:23 for **all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**,

**4. The Gracious Declaration of our Salvation**

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

**:24 being justified as a gift by His grace**

**5. The Wonderful Redeemer of our Salvation**

:24 being justified as a gift by His grace

**through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;**

:25 **whom God displayed publicly**

**as a propitiation**

**in His blood**

**through faith.**

**Intro / Context**

I have been asked – a number of times now – regarding our Reformation Tour, “What was *my* favorite thing to see – first hand?” And there are some strong candidates in answer to that question.

* I certainly enjoyed the Castle in Edinburgh, positioned at the top of a high hill, it is impossible to miss. Portions of the Castle date back to the 12th century. It is truly a fantastic site – but not my favorite.
* If you saw the movie, *The Essential Church,* you may remember *this* site – the Covenanter’s Memorial. I was particularly moved to see this – just a round circle of stones commemorating the site of the town gallows where Christians were martyred by hanging.
* I enjoyed seeing John Knox’s parking place. For those of you unfamiliar with it, it is the famous reformer’s place of burial next to his Church, which has been paved over for use as a parking lot. All that marks the spot is a small stone marker. Well, and a number “23” to mark the parking space.
* I also enjoyed seeing the *birthplace of golf –* St. Andrews, Scotland. A strikingly beautiful plot of grass next to the North Sea.
* Then, in London, there are the iconic red, double-decker buses, together with the strange, little, black taxis. Great to see first-hand. But not my favorite.
* Big Ben, for me, was a special site, as was Westminster Abbey. Still not my favorite.
* Oxford and Cambridge
* I saw Spurgeon’s Church – well, really, the site on which Spurgeon’s Church once stood. Since he preached there in the 1800s the Church has been destroyed and rebuilt … twice. So, it’s really not *Spurgeon’s* Church. So, not my favorite.
* Surprisingly, I actually did enjoy seeing the graves of three of my heroes of the faith – Isaac Watts, John Bunyan, and John Owen.
* Churchhill’s war-room
* The Swiss Alps and the Jungfrau Mountains of Grindelwald, Wengen, Lauterbrunnen
* But none of those – as great as they are were my favorite thing to see. My favorite site could really be described as just 35 paver-bricks.

But before I tell you more about that, I need to remind you of our study this morning. We are studying the **Solas of the Reformation.**

***Sola Scriptura* – Scripture alone**

***Solus Christus –* Christ alone**

***Sola Gratia* – Grace alone**

***Sola Fide –* Faith alone** – the one means of possessing Christ’s righteousness, being *justified* before a Holy God

***Soli Deo Gloria –* God’s glory alone** – the one great aim of every true child of God – that God would receive all Glory and Honor

We find ourselves now on the fourth of five ***Solas of the Reformation*** – specifically, **Sola Fide**, Faith Alone. Thus far, we have reviewed **Sola Scriptura** – the one source of Divine Revelation, which opened the door to the other four **Solas**. We considered **Solus Christus**, Christ alone– the One source of Redemption and forgiveness of sin, which restored the Savior to His rightful place as the *only* source of Salvation. And last Lord’s Day, we focused on **Sola Gratia,** Grace alone – the one means of spiritual restoration. These, and the final **Sola**, **Soli Deo Gloria**, the Glory of God alone, denote the observable principles at work in the hearts and lives of the reformers. Purely by God’s good Providence, which allows for no *accident*, the reformers – one-by-one began to look into God’s Word, beholding truth which had been hidden for centuries. The Roman Catholic Church had scandalously held the Word of God from her people, bound up in Jerome’s Latin translation, the Vulgate. And that allowed for many and varied mischaracterizations of Biblical doctrine – and even outright heresies. And nowhere were these errors more grievously present than in what had become of the Gospel. The so called “Good News” had degenerated into a complicated system of works which promised the *possibility* of Salvation. And that led the Church’s followers on a never-ending pursuit of their salvation by good works. The reformers soon recognized the stark difference between what Rome was teaching, and the pure Gospel of Salvation as articulated in Scripture.

One of the earliest reformers to address this alarming difference, was a young pastor in Cambridge, England. For now, we’ll call him the pastor of the Church at Wor-ces-ter Well, we might pronounce it Wor-ces-ter. But, as the English tend to do, they pronounce this word dramatically differently that we might. They pronounce it Wuh-stir. [ And that is precisely why I don’t even try to pronounce the salty liquid that we sprinkle on our steak. ] Well, this man became a Catholic priest at age 30, in the Church at Wuh-stir. And he started out as a good Catholic priest – upholding all of the Church’s teachings and speaking with disdain against the rumblings of reformers – especially the idea of putting the Bible into the people’s hands. He was a very colorful character and Cambridge was a lively place. He frequented a placed called *The White Horse Inn,* where pastors and scholars would gather to discuss theology. And this pastor did so with no other than the likes of William Tyndale. Another colleague of his, Thomas Bilney, had become convinced of some of the errors of the Church and the need for reform – that Scripture was the only source of truth, and that a sinner could never add to Christ’s work with his own works.

One day, he went to the Wuh-stir Church pastor for confession. Instead of a typical, brief confession before the priest, it is said that – on his knees – Bilney poured out his heart to this pastor for hours. And instead of confessing his sins *against* the Catholic Church, he confessed his sins against God in his years of teaching Rome’s falsehoods. The pastor from Wuh-stir responded with repentance and bitter tears. And Bilney began to greatly influence him in the biblical doctrines. Soon, the pastor from Wuh-stir joined Bilney in preaching against the Church’s errors – idolatry and other common abuses.

Bilney eventually drew the attention of the Catholic hierarchy. He was arrested, imprisoned for more than a year, and ultimately burned at the stake. But as for the pastor from Wuh-stir, even the treatment of his friend Bilney did not dampen his enthusiasm for biblical truth. Instead, it seemed to strengthen his resolve.

I was intrigued by this reformer’s story and went looking to see if I could find any of his sermons. Unfortunately, though he must have preached more than a thousand sermons in his 40 years of ministry, we know of only 41 that still survive. But what is there is still red-hot, still smoking. Listen to these less than subtle condemnations of the Catholic Church’s perspective of the Gospel. These are from his sermons, most of which were preached in 1552 …

… all the Papists [that is, the adherents of the Pope and his teachings] think themselves to be saved by the law, and I myself have been of that dangerous, perilous and damnable opinion, till I was thirty years of age, so long I walked in darkness, and in the shadow of death … he that departs out of this world in that opinion, he shall never come to heaven … we may not be justified by our doings … XXXVI, pp.792-793

… these merit-mongers have so many good works, that they be able to sell them for money; and so to bring other men to heaven by buying of their good works, which, no doubt, is the greatest contempt of the passion of Christ that can be devised. XXV, pp.555-556

… the Papists make [Christ] but half a Savior; for they think that they with their good works must help Him to save them half; so they blaspheme Him, and take away His dignity … XXXV, pp.775

Well, I hope you can hear, that rhetoric like that was only going to get this pastor from Wuh-stir in hot water with the powerful Roman Catholic Church. And eventually it did.

But what this now middle-aged pastor was articulating, and seeking to protect and restore, was the very Gospel itself – *Sola Fide,* Faith alone in Christ alone for Salvation. We saw that the first three Solas, even if they were not formally articulated *during* the reformation, were thoroughly biblical, and observable in the hearts and lives of the reformers. So it is with Sola Fide. Listen to how this one pastor articulated this biblical teaching …

… all the merits of Christ are ours; His fulfilling of the Law is ours, and so we are justified before God, and finally attain to everlasting life … they that be in Christ, are partakers of all His merits and benefits, of everlasting life and felicity [happiness]. XXIII, p.478

Perhaps, as you can even hear there in his words, the doctrine that he is articulating is the biblical doctrine of Justification by Faith. Salvation by faith, not works, or even faith plus works. Adding works to faith is what the Catholic Church at that time colloquially called, ‘patching’ – adding what they believed was lacking in Christ’s work. The reformers rejected this ‘patching’ altogether and began to preach Faith alone in Christ alone. Martin Luther discovered this doctrine while translating Romans 1:17, which reads,

**… in it** [that is, in the gospel] **the righteousness of God is revealed from faith, as it is written, But the righteous man shall live by faith.**

That statement greatly troubled Luther, who was endeavoring to earn his righteousness piecemeal through a lifetime of good works. But what Luther rightly understood this verse to be saying, was that **righteousness** was only to be obtained by faith – not by works. That is why he placed this doctrine in the highest place. He said that *sola fide,* the doctrine of *justification by faith,* was ‘the chief article … with and by which the Church stands, without which it falls.’

Well, let’s look to the Word for this truth. Would God’s people turn to Romans, chapter 3. Romans, chapter 3, where Paul will provide for us **Five Compelling Testimonies to *Sola Fide –* Faith Alone.**

**Read Romans 3:21-26 🡪**

You will no doubt notice that our passage begins with that adversative, **But**. That is because Paul is inserting a contrast here in verse :21 with a point he has just made over the previous chapters. Very quickly and very briefly, given our purposes this morning, would you flip back two chapters to Romans 1:18. There, Paul issues an indictment against the heathen world. Would you glance at verse :18 …

**:18 For the wrath of God is revealed**

**from heaven**

**against all ungodliness**

**and unrighteousness of men,**

**who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,**

**:19 because that which is known about God is evident within them;**

**for God made it evident to them.**

They *know* that there is a God. But they *live* as if God did not exist. And because of that, they live under the just wrath of God. But that’s the *heathen* world, the godless world of the Gentiles. What about the Jewish person? Paul moves to address them in chapter two. Would you please turn there – chapter two, verse :1.

2:1 Therefore you are without excuse,

every man of you who passes judgment,

for in that you judge another,

you condemn yourself;

for you who judge practice the same things.

:2 And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.

So then, the Jewish man is in no better spiritual standing than the heathen. Both stand under the judgment of God. Would you just note Paul’s conclusion there in verse :9 …

:9 There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil,

of the Jew first and also of the Greek,

:10 but glory and honor and peace

to every man who does good,

to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

:11 For there is no partiality with God.

:12 For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law;

and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law;

All people – Gentile or Jew – stand justly condemned before the Lord – whether the Gentiles **without the Law**, or the Jewish man **under the Law**. Both stand condemned as Paul concludes in chapter 3, verse :9 – **both Jews and Greeks** [Gentiles] **are all under sin**. How then can a sinner be saved?

And if Paul were to stop there, humanity would forever be left in hopeless despair. But Paul doesn’t stop there – **all are under sin** and under the just condemnation of God … **But now**. That’s how Paul starts his lengthy and glorious sentence of hope in verse :21. Would you look there – chapter 3, verse :21 … **But now.** There is unspeakable hope in those two little words. Paul has already made clear that **by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified** – made fit to stand in God’s Holy presence. Mankind, both Gentile and Jew, had made a spiritual trainwreck of their lives. Both are dreadfully under God’s judgment … **But now.** And Paul proceeds to declare *justification by faith alone.* What Paul gives us here are **Five Compelling Testimonies to *Sola Fide –* Faith Alone.**

**“Faith Alone”**

**Five Compelling Testimonies to *Sola Fide –* Faith Alone**

**1. The Divine Provision of our Salvation**

**:21 But now**

**apart from the Law**

**the righteousness of God has been manifested,**

**being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,**

**:22 even the righteousness of God**

I want you to note that verses :21 all the way down through verse :26 is ONE very lengthy, very dynamic, sentence. There is a mountain of crucial detail in these verses. But the simple sentence of this lengthy sentence is contained right there in verse :21 – **But now … the righteousness of God has been manifested. Righteousness** has been a major theme already in this epistle, and it will continue so. The word in its various forms is used more than sixty times in this letter. Would you flip back to chapter 1 again – this time to verse :17 … Paul began by declaring that …

Romans 1:16-17 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

:17 For **in it [**that is, **the Gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.”**

But mankind is devoid of this righteousness …

:18 For **the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness**,

Romans 1:29 being **filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice**; they are gossips,

Romans 3:10 as it is written, “**THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS**, NOT EVEN ONE;

So, when Paul announces here in chapter three, verse :21, **But now … the righteousness of God has been manifested,** that’s good news. That is THE Good News. Jesus Christ has come in God’s righteousness. **In the fullness of time**, as Paul has it in Galatians 4:4, **God sent forth His Son**. What Paul begins to proclaim here in 3:21 is the Gospel – the pure, unadulterated, Gospel in all its fullness and glory. **No more gloom – the Light** has dawned, to use Isaiah’s imagery. **The righteousness of God has been manifested!** This is the one thing that doomed humanity needed – **the righteousness of God.**

This **righteousness** of which Paul speaks is God’s moral perfection and His standard – the very basis of His judgment – moral uprightness, virtuousness, purity, conformity to God’s standard. The problem is, mankind’s attempt to measure up to God’s standard, God’s **righteousness**, is dreadfully inadequate. It is precisely this **righteousness** – God’s moral standard – which we lack. We are anything *but* **righteous** – according to God’s standard. If we will be righteous, God must supply it. And here in verse :21, that is Paul’s opening declaration – that God has made provision for our Salvation by giving what we lacked most – **the righteousness of God.**

And Paul describes this **righteousness** in unmistakable terms. First of all he says that this **righteousness** is **apart from the Law**. The Jewish people *knew* what God’s standard was. It was God’s Law. And they knew that they must attain to that divine standard if they were to be saved. But they also learned, from hundreds of years of their own human effort, that salvation by Law-keeping was an impossible task. Definitively, this is not a standard that we can work toward, to which we can one day attain. This **righteousness** cannot be achieved by **Law** keeping – even **the Law** of God. This **righteousness** is THE standard because God IS this standard. This is HIS **righteousness.** And He meets His standard by providing a perfect sacrifice for sinners – His own Son.

The second way that Paul characterizes **God’s righteousness** is that it was **witnessed by the Law and the prophets.** The Jewish people had portioned the Scriptures out into two general categories – **Law** and **Prophets**. Both testified of **God’s righteousness.** The **Law** provided God’s standard. The **Prophets** spoke of a coming **righteous** Messiah – God’s provision for such **righteousness.**

May I tell you what our pastor from Wuh-stir said about **the righteousness of God**? He said …

to say or to believe that we should be saved by the law, this is a great dishonoring of Christ’s passion; for the law serves to another purpose, it brings us to the knowledge of our sins, and so to Christ; for when we be come through the law to the knowledge of our sins, when we perceive our filthiness, they we are ready to come to Christ, and to fetch remission of our sins at His hands. XXV, pp.555-556

So, Paul begins here with God’s provision for our Salvation – **the righteousness of God.** But how do we lay hold of this **righteousness?** This is Paul’s *second* **Compelling Testimony to *Sola Fide***. We find it in verse :22 …

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**2. The Straightforward** **Means of our Salvation**

even the righteousness of God

**through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe;**

Paul has already declared that this **righteousness of God** is **apart from the Law**, it’s not achievable by human efforts to keep God’s moral standard. And he has *hinted* that the **Prophets** spoke of the ***manifestation*** of **God’s righteousness**, ostensibly through a coming Messiah. And here in verse :22, Paul directly states *how it is* that we can lay hold of this **righteousness –** it is only **through faith in Jesus Christ**. God has indeed broken into the course of history, fulfilling His plan of redemption with great news – as Paul describes it in 2nd Corinthians 5:21 …

He [God the Father] made Him [Jesus Christ] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

But it’s not enough just to hear about this revelation. If all we ever do is hear it, admire it, consider it, think about the news that God has provided righteousness for us - it remains worthless. This news must be received by faith. **God’s righteousness** as revealed in **Jesus Christ**, is received **by** faith, it is appropriated **by faith** – a faith that rests solely on the Lord Jesus Himself and His work of redemption on the Cross for us. This is the consistent testimony of the Bible. We might even think of John’s Gospel as the Gospel of belief – Sola Fide. Listen to this …

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, **even to those who believe in His name**,

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever believes in Him shall not perish**, **but have eternal life**.

John 8:24 “Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for **unless you believe that I am He**, you will die in your sins.”

John 20:31 but these [signs] have been written **so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name**.

Sola Fide is also obviously a detail that Paul preached …

Galatians 2:16 … **a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus**, … **since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified**.

Paul believed in *Sola Fide, justification by faith.*

Our pastor from Wuh-stir had also come to grasp and to preach this truth. He said …

let us study to believe in Christ. Let us put all our hope, trust, and confidence only in Him, let us patch Him with nothing … our merits are not able to deserve everlasting life; it is too precious a thing to be merited by man. XXXV, pp. 776-777

So, this **righteousness of God**, is availed through **faith in Jesus Christ**. But would you notice one more astounding thing? This promise is, as Paul concludes, **for all those who believe, for there is no distinction.** This benevolent promise of God – for what mankind needs most – is available to any and all who need it – the Jewish people, but not just the Jewish people. It is for all. There is no distinction between individuals from either camp if they place their faith in Jesus Christ. Just as there is no distinction between God's judgment of both Gentiles and Jews as sinful and in need of saving grace. And this is Paul’s third **Compelling Testimony of Sola Fide.** We find it in verse :23 …

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**3. The Universal Need of our Salvation**

through faith in Jesus Christ for **all** those who believe

**for there is no distinction;**

:23 for **all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**,

Now the phrase at the end of verse :22 functions as a link-pin between two statements. It goes as much with the statement in verse :22 as it does with the statement in verse :23. **There is no distinction** with regard to those who come to faith in Christ, and **there is no distinction** with regard to God’s wrath upon all sinners. God does not grade on a curve. God does not provide one way of salvation for some and another for others. And it’s not as if some people are better than others – who don’t need salvation. **The Need of Salvation** – by faith in Jesus Christ – **is Universal** – **all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.** This is just exactly what Paul proved in the opening two chapters of this letter – the Gentiles are sinners in need of salvation, and so are the Jews – **there is no distinction … all have sinned.**

Now again and again, in our study of the **Solas**,we have come across this sobering truth – that as a result of the Fall of Adam and Eve, we find ourselves in a desperate condition – inherently sinful, temporally vexed, physically dying, and spiritually dead. I have probably uttered those four features a thousand times. That’s our woeful condition as humans. And as sinners, obviously, we **fall short of the glory of God.** We don’t measure up to God’s standard of righteousness. We have no glory of our own to shine forth, but we don’t even reflect **the glory of God**. God is not seen in us as He ought to be seen. After all, we were created in God’s image! Hence the need – as Paul began in verse :21 – of **God’s righteousness.**

And our pastor from Wuh-stir spoke to this truth as well …

… consider the works of the Law, how they ought to be done … The Law itself is Holy and good, but we are not able to keep it, and therefore we must seek our righteousness, not in the Law, but in Christ … XXXVI, pp.792-793

And you can almost hear someone say, yes, yes, yes - I know all of this …

God's righteousness has now been fully displayed – the one thing that people need most, has been given to us by God and …

that it is **apart** from an attempt to live according to God's **Law**

that it was declared for centuries by the writers of the OT

that this righteousness is only appropriated by faith

that it is widely available for all who believe

But, how does it work? How can even God take an unrighteous sinner like me and impart this righteousness? And even if we are able to answer that, why? Why would God do that? What would motivate God to such a magnanimous act? And isn't there something I can do in return - something I can do to show God that I'm worthy of this kindness? Isn't there something I can do to contribute to this great cause of saving my soul? This is Paul’s focus in verse :24. Would you glance down at that …

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for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

**:24 being justified as a gift by His grace**

Paul tell us here the way – the only way – for a sinner to come to rest in **God’s righteousness.** He or she must – no other way around it – he or she must be **justified.** Now, as important a truth as this is, it is nothing short of alarming how few Christians really understand what ***justification*** is. Simply stated, *justification* is the reason that we would offer as to why we should come into God’s Holy presence. Sadly, many believe that their works would commend them to God – “I’ve been a good person”, they say. Our works can never save us. Please know, our pastor from Wuh-stir preached this as well …

… we must do good works, and God requires them of us; but yet we may not put our trust in them, nor think to get to heaven with the same, for our works are wicked and evil, and the best of them be imperfect … we must not be justified through our good works, but through the passion of Christ, and so live by a free justification and righteousness in Christ Jesus. XXXVII, pp.808-809

You see, what this pastor had learned from Scripture was that ***justification***, which is by **faith** alone, is a legal declaration – by God – that we stand in **the righteousness** of Christ, and not in our own efforts – no matter how good or noble. If you will, it is a divine ‘Not Guilty’ verdict. **Justification by faith** is a declaration by God in which God *imputes* to us Christ’s righteousness. It is not the same thing as sanctification – as the Catholic Church teaches it. It is a declaration that changes our standing before God instantaneously – not over the course of a lifetime. Christ’s righteousness is credited to the account of those who place their faith in Him. Again, we are not immediately *made* righteous, we are *reckoned* or *considered, declared* to be such by God. What God sees now in the individual is the righteousness of Christ. As Paul describes in Philippians, chapter 3, he had abandoned the idea of working his way to heaven. His only desire was that he

**may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith**,

And please note – there is nothing we can do to earn or repay this marvelous gift of ***justification by faith***. As Paul details it here for us, we are **justified as a gift by His grace.** No person deserves such a magnificent **gift** of God. No one could ever do anything to earn or merit it. It is a gift – one given purely by **His grace.** It is all of God’s undeserved favor.

But someone may yet ask, how is such an incredible gift made possible. This is Paul’s final **Compelling Testimony to Sola Fide**, found in verses :24-25 …

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God did not, indeed He could not just ignore our sin. That would not be Just. And His justice system was so perfect that it required that no other than His own righteous Son should come and atone for the sins of God’s people. Paul says it this way – that this ***justification*** was **through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.** This is provides the reason why God was able to grant us such a gift – our sins were paid for in full by Jesus Christ.

Well, by now, it will not surprise you that our pastor from Wuh-stir also proclaimed this truth …

Now that which we lacked, that same hath God fulfilled and supplied, in that he hath sent his Son to supply that which man’s works could not do, and with his fulfilling of the law, and painful death, he merited, that as many as believe in him, though they had done all the sins of the world, yet shall they not be damned, but are righteous before the face of God, believing in Christ: so that remission of sins, and everlasting life, maybe sought nowhere else but only in Christ.

He speaks to the price of our redemption, which Paul addresses in verse :25. That **in Christ Jesus … God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood.** This is why God was able to **gift** us our **righteousness** by **justification** – Christ ***redeemed*** us with **His blood** – His painful sacrifice to death on the Cross! As Paul said to the Corinthians, **you have been bought with a price**. And as Peter declares, this payment was not made **with perishable things like silver or gold … but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.** Jesus Christ is the **Wonderful Redeemer of our Salvation.**

Now, I still owe you a few things. I promised you the identity of this pastor. And I promised to tell you of my favorite Reformation site. This pastor from Wuh-stir is a man named Hugh Latimer. Hugh Latimer would become one of the early reformers in England, a man of great courage. It is recorded that – in addition to his own Church in Wuh-stir, he would often preach in St. Edwards Church in Cambridge. In God’s remarkable goodness, I had the privilege not only to go inside of this Church, but even to ascend into the ancient and rickety, wooden pulpit. When I did so, I was struck with an overwhelming sense of my unworthiness to be there. You see, Hugh Latimer paid a tremendous price for his faithfulness to the Solas of the Reformation. He paid with his life. After years of harassment and imprisonment, he was at long last condemned to die by bloody Queen Mary. And at Oxford, in 1555, Hugh Latimer – nearing 70 years old – was burned at the stake, along with his friend, Nicholas Ridley. John Fox quotes Latimer as faithfully calling out to Ridley, as the fire was set to the sticks piled around them,

Play the man, Master Ridley; we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out.

And so, as for those 35 pavers, my favorite spot our our Reformation Tour, there is there on a busy street in Oxford a small cross made of pavers in the road, to mark the actual site where these faithful men of God were dispatch from this world … to the next. You see, *Sola Fide, Faith alone, Justification by Faith* the defense this doctrine was worth dying.

**Rock of Ages**

Not the labors of my hands

can fulfill thy law's demands;

could my zeal no respite know,

could my tears forever flow,

all for sin could not atone;

thou must save, and thou alone.